



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 25, 2007

*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

For Information Contact Public Affairs
WYN HORNBuckle
Telephone: (602) 514-7625
Cell: (602) 525-2681

FEDS DISMANTLE LOAN FRAUD RING OPERATING IN ARIZONA, NEVADA, AND CALIFORNIA

Twelve Indicted, Nine Arrested

PHOENIX -- Today in Phoenix, a thirty-eight count federal grand jury indictment was unsealed against 12 people: Lutrell Maurice Sharpe, 39, Micah Lynn Bowens, 38, Jennifer Sue Sellers (a licensed Nevada real estate agent), 29, Marcus Vyncyn Dozzell, 33, Charles William Dozzell, 63, Angela Lishen Romious, 31, Alonzo Love, 33, Gina Maria Greco, 37, Breanna Carmela Davis, 25, Autumn-Leigh Mercedes Bruce, 24, Misti Theresa Lenoir-Stewart, 28, and Kristy Lynn Murdock, 28 (the "defendants"). The defendants are charged with conspiracy, loan fraud, mail fraud and wire fraud. Additional indicted charges include: money laundering (Sharpe, Bowens, Sellers, Love, and Romious); false statements to a U.S. Probation Officer and using a social security number obtained with false information (Sharpe); and using someone else's social security number and aggravated identity theft (Bowens). The defendants reside in the Phoenix metropolitan area and in Nevada and California.

The indictment alleges that in connection with the fraud and conspiracy, which spanned five years, the defendants, using fraudulently obtained financing, acquired, refinanced, and/or "sold" 16 residential properties in Goodyear, AZ, Buckeye, AZ, Las Vegas, NV, Henderson, NV, and Lemon Grove, CA. According to the indictment, the defendants acquired and refinanced 11 luxury vehicles with fraudulently obtained loans, including Cadillac Escalades, BMWs, Mercedes, and Hummers. Of the 12 indicted defendants, nine were arrested, two of whom remain detained (Sharpe and Bowens). The three remaining defendants (Greco, Murdock, and Stewart) have been summoned to appear in federal court to face charges.

Andrea Whelan, the Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigation Division in Phoenix, stated, "Mortgage fraud is clearly rampant in Arizona and elsewhere. The Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigation Division will continue to collaborate with its law enforcement partners to vigorously pursue these serious financial crimes, as the damage they cause extends beyond the financial institutions defrauded to the community at large."

To accomplish the fraud and conspiracy, the indictment alleges the defendants established legal entities and businesses in Arizona, Nevada and elsewhere. The "businesses" purported to conduct legitimate operations and employ a highly paid staff. The defendants then claimed on loan applications to be highly paid professionals with those entities, with annual incomes as high as \$400,000. The fictitious incomes were then "verified" by other co-defendants.

According to the indictment, the defendants supplemented their false income claims with various types of bogus and altered documents. For example, several defendants claimed to hold the same account at CSE Federal Credit Union. The indictment alleges that the account statements were forged and reflected inflated account balances. Similarly, a defendant obtained a loan using a bogus

bank statement for Vernon/Commerce Credit Union. This account statement purported to cover the period June 1, 2004 to “June 31, 2004” (there are only 30 days in June). Other times, it is alleged that the defendants supplied lenders with bank statements for accounts they actually held, but the statements were altered to reflect inflated balances. The indictment also alleges that the defendants provided lenders with bogus IRS Forms W-2 and pay stubs.

As alleged in the indictment, on occasion, certain defendants refinanced properties using fraudulently obtained financing. It is also alleged that on certain occasions the defendants “sold” properties to other co-defendants, who “purchased” the properties with fraudulently obtained loans.

The indictment further alleges that Sharpe and Bowens used aliases in connection with the fraud and conspiracy. It is alleged that Sharpe, who was on federal supervised release during the conspiracy, used his alias, and an improperly obtained social security number, to purchase a Mercedes. Sharpe also used his alias to conduct sundry activities for the defendant-controlled businesses. For his part, according to the indictment, Bowens used his alias to acquire vehicles and real estate, to verify the false employment history of his co-conspirators, and even verify his own false employment history. The indictment also alleges that Bowens used his alias and fraudulently obtained financing to purchase a property and then “sell” the property to his real identity.

U.S. Attorney Daniel G. Knauss stated, “This was a brazen scheme. To shut it down, a top-notch team was assembled. Agents from the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, U.S. Secret Service, Postal Inspection Service, and Social Security Administration—Office of Inspector General, and others, doggedly tracked down leads and evidence. The result is a significant indictment that should put criminals and would-be fraudsters on notice that the investigation and prosecution of loan fraud is a top priority.”

A conviction for loan, mail and wire fraud affecting a financial institution carries a maximum penalty of 30 years imprisonment and a maximum fine of \$1,000,000. A conviction for transactional money laundering carries a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment and a maximum fine of \$250,000. Convictions for conspiracy, false statements, and social security fraud, carry a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a maximum fine of \$250,000. A conviction for aggravated identity theft carries a two year mandatory term of imprisonment and a maximum fine of \$250,000. Federal law requires that a prison sentence for aggravated identity theft run consecutively to any other term of imprisonment. In determining an actual sentence, the sentencing district court judge will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The joint investigation was conducted by the U.S. Secret Service, Internal Revenue Service (Criminal Investigation Division), Postal Inspection Service, and Social Security Administration—Office of Inspector General, among others. The prosecution is being handled by Robert Long, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-07-544-PHX-ROS
RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-132(Sharpe, et al)

###